

sustainability of the Allegheny National Forest.

In my role as Republican leader on the House Agriculture Committee, I am dedicated to putting forth policies that promote natural solutions to keep our forests healthy for generations to come.

These policies include working closely with the Forest Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to manage our forests, foster healthier lands, and allow this economic engine to thrive.

By supporting the Forest Service and encouraging active stewardship, we can support healthy forests and rural communities for generations to come.

Currently, we have two bills focused on improving our forest management: the RESTORE Act from DOUG LAMALFA from California and the FIRE Act from DUSTY JOHNSON from South Dakota. These bills aim to improve and expedite forest management and restoration projects for healthier and more resilient forests.

Of course, we cannot talk about forest products without discussing the environmental benefits of a well-managed forest and forest productivity. We know the best solutions are natural solutions, not burdensome regulations or carbon taxes, but active innovation.

Landowners and foresters are among the strongest environmental advocates in our country. I recognize their efforts and continue to promote forest health by empowering the original stewards of our land.

According to the Forest Service, forests are sequestering 14 percent of all U.S. carbon emissions. That number could nearly double with policies that increase forest management, forest health, and forest production.

Active management, including timbering, holds the greatest potential for sequestering carbon and storing it indefinitely in forest products.

To help encourage new markets for forest products and forest health, I was proud to help lead the Timber Innovation Act. This bipartisan legislation, which was included in the 2018 farm bill, directly supports the development of cross-laminated timber and tall wood building construction.

Mr. Speaker, Forest Products Week is more than forestry or timber harvesting. It is a time to focus on the great resources our forests provide. From a natural habitat for wildlife, to an abundance of outdoor recreational activities, to carbon sequestration, to a strong rural economy, our forests, big and small, must continue to be utilized for our needs today and for our future generations.

TAKING A HARD LOOK AT THE NATIONAL STOCKPILE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to pass my

bill, the Strengthening America's Strategic National Stockpile Act, so that we never again are dependent on foreign manufacturers for the supplies we need to keep Americans safe.

This bipartisan bill, brought to this Chamber by eight Democrats and eight Republicans, would make sure our country never again endures what we went through in those early days of the COVID-19 pandemic when we all received those urgent calls, only to learn that our stockpile, the national stockpile, would only provide a fraction of what we needed, many pieces inside expired, some of them molding.

This bill would ensure that we have a properly maintained national stockpile of medical supplies so that our doctors, nurses, and frontline workers have the personal protective equipment they need to protect themselves while helping others.

Put yourself back into the mindset of April 2020: frantic calls and e-mails from essential workers begging for help. As cases of COVID surged, both in our hospitals and in our nursing homes, our frontline workers made it clear that they simply didn't have enough protective equipment to keep themselves safe.

In fact, the National Institutes of Health conducted a study on why we have a shortage of protective equipment. Through that study, they found that the U.S. anticipated—we knew—that our national supply would come up short, and they estimated that we would need 3.5 billion N95 masks to protect Americans from a pandemic that affected only a third of our country. This is why we cannot move on without cleaning up our system.

In 2020, every Member of this body was hearing from doctors, nurses, and first responders who were bravely battling this disease and improvised face shields and homemade solutions to protect themselves.

I still think about the physician in Brighton, Michigan, who compared his job to being a soldier on the front lines, wearing only a T-shirt and a baseball cap instead of body armor and a helmet; or the nurses in Mason, Michigan, who had to share one gown, not per person, but for the entire staff on a COVID ward.

In response, I found myself doing anything and everything I could to secure protective equipment for Michigan: calling mask manufacturers, negotiating with companies in China, and fighting for each and every shipment. I was sending Ziplocs of 10 masks to our nursing homes individually. If a Congresswoman is negotiating in the dead of night with a Chinese middleman for masks, our supply chains have officially failed us.

This searing experience shook me to my core. We can and must do better to protect Americans and to learn from our mistakes.

This bill, the Strengthening America's Strategic National Stockpile Act, would ensure that if States ever need

to turn to it, our stockpile will be fully supplied, maintained, and ready to go.

It requires constant maintenance and inventory checks to make sure items aren't expired. We need to make the distribution process transparent. It helps States to create their own local stockpiles, and it prevents waste of taxpayer dollars by allowing the stockpile to sell excess supplies to other agencies before they expire.

Perhaps most importantly, this bill incentivizes production of critical medical supplies right here at home, in the United States. Through a \$500 million program, the stockpile will partner directly with American manufacturers to expand capacity and strengthen our domestic supply chains.

Now, in Michigan, we get it. Before the pandemic, the mere mention of supply chains was enough to put some to sleep. But the last year and a half has changed that. The issue is now on the front page of every paper and at the heart of every key business and policy decision.

From masks to microchips, the disruptions we have experienced have forced us to pull back the curtain and take a hard look at the systems we rely on in our daily lives. Michiganders have been saying this for 30 years. If you outsource our supply chains too far to China, it becomes a national security issue, and it has.

Here in Congress, we have a responsibility to respond to the way this crisis has shook our communities for our first responders and our businesses. I ask my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to vote "yes" on this critical piece of legislation. Help clean up the mess that was on display last year. That is our job and our responsibility to the next crisis.

HIGHLIGHTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TONY GONZALES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

There is a lot going on in the world right now, and it is very easy to forget that we have millions of Americans who are living in a very abusive environment.

Many people walk around with scars that everyone can see. But also, many of us walk around with scars that nobody can see. In particular, I would like to highlight the women who are in this very difficult situation.

When I was 5 years old, I recall when my mother woke me up in the middle of the night to sneak us out of our very abusive home, and I remember spending time in a battered women's shelter. That moment will never leave me.

Looking back at it now, my mother was the bravest woman that I knew then and the bravest woman that I know now.

And it doesn't have to be this way. People don't have to be in an environment that is constantly under abuse. You can leave, whether that is today, whether that is tomorrow, whether that is decades from now.

Today, I am very proud. Years ago, my mother left that abusive environment. Just last year, she was able to get her bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at El Paso, UTEP. It was amazing for her to go back and get her education.

Today, she lives with me. She, along with my wife, Angel, helps raise our children. And today, she is in an environment where she is loved.

This month, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we can't lose sight of that. If you are in a violent situation, you, too, can get out. You, too, can change the direction of your life, and your children can go off and be very successful because we live in the greatest country on Earth. Whether it is today, tomorrow, or a decade from now, please leave your abusive environment and get back to a place of happiness and love.

□ 1030

STRIKETOBER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GARCÍA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, from this podium, and on the streets of Chicago, I have spoken out quite a bit about essential workers.

They work every day to keep our country going, often risking their lives, their families, and they deserve respect and dignity on the job.

But today, I want to talk about the courage that it takes not to go to work and to go out on strike for better working conditions.

As we speak, thousands of workers are on strike; from the nurses and healthcare workers to the people who make cereal, tractors, and whiskey. And tens of thousands more have taken strike votes and are ready to join them if they can't reach agreements with their employers.

It is a strike wave, and we are calling it "Striketober."

And I stand today in solidarity with these workers who are fighting for safer working conditions, a decent living wage, and the ability to retire with dignity.

Just in the past few weeks in my city of Chicago, I stood with Nabisco workers from the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers' International Union, auto mechanics from the International Association of Machinists, and employees at the Art Institute of Chicago who are fighting to join a union, AFSCME.

Only days later, the workers at a local tortilla plant in my own neighborhood, El Milagro, walked out protesting an unsafe workplace, unfair wages, and sexual harassment at the company's plants.

In recent years, teachers, nurses, county employees, nursing home workers, and even the symphony orchestra performers in our city went on strike.

They aren't just striking for themselves, they fought to provide community resources in our schools, improve patient care for our seniors, and create art for the public.

These workers and their struggles are the newest chapters of Chicago's historic role as the center of our country's labor movement.

International Workers' Day—celebrated around the world on May 1—commemorates the Haymarket protests in Chicago in 1886, which led to the 8-hour workday and ended child labor.

The Pullman strike, brutally suppressed by our own government, is commemorated every year on Labor Day.

This is my own history, too.

I came to Chicago as an immigrant from Mexico, and my parents' jobs and benefits as Teamsters—and my own work as a member of the Retail Workers Union, as a member of the Teamsters, the United Legal Workers affiliated with the UAW—helped make me who I am today.

So when these workers walk out on strike, they walk out for all of us.

Safety at work, dignity in retirement, a living wage, these are important issues for everyone.

There is a picket line chant that says, "If we can't get it, shut it down." And it is time that working-class people did just that.

Striketober was a long time coming. The Federal minimum wage has been at \$7.25 for over a decade, but millionaires got 62 percent richer during the pandemic.

A vial of insulin costs \$6 to make, but pharmaceutical companies sell it for as much as \$275.

Rent, childcare, and medical bills go up and up, and pundits won't stop complaining about wage inflation.

So workers across the country are standing up to say: Enough is enough. And they are standing up for us.

So we have got to support these workers on the picket lines any way we can.

In Congress, this means supporting proworker legislation, like the Protecting the Right to Organize Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, which guarantees workplace rights.

It means protecting frontline workers, from nurses to CTA bus drivers, to Instacart shoppers.

It means supporting workers at the bargaining table and on the picket line because when workers fight, we all win.

Si, se puede. Yes, we can.

RECOGNIZING RAYMOND ANDREW SMITH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary sacrifice by a resident of Brooklyn, New York.

Private First Class Raymond Andrew Smith was 18 years old when he made the ultimate sacrifice for our country during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, in the Korean war.

Growing up, Raymond and his sister Helen experienced a difficult childhood in foster care, forcing them to take on responsibilities far beyond their years. And despite the challenges he faced, at the age of 14 Raymond joined the Navy.

Once Raymond's age was discovered by his superiors, the Navy granted him an honorable discharge, but that wouldn't stop Raymond's drive for service. Four years later, Raymond enlisted in the United States Army, and after 6 months, he was shipped off to fight in the Korean war.

The Korean war began in June of 1950 when General Douglas MacArthur, alongside South Korean and U.N. forces made significant progress into the north with hopes of uniting the two countries again.

However, Communist China under Mao Zedong had other plans, and sent roughly 100,000 troops to the Chosin Reservoir to counter progress made by America and our allies, leading to the Battle of Chosin Reservoir.

With the 7th Infantry Division, Raymond fought in this battle, a battle many military experts and scholars consider to be one of the most brutal conflicts in modern history due to the sheer fierceness of our opponents and severe weather elements.

For 17 days, the Battle of Chosin Reservoir raged on. In that timeframe, it is estimated that the United States suffered 18,000 casualties, while the Chinese suffered upward of 50,000 casualties, 30,000 just from the freezing cold alone. During the battle, temperatures were said to have dropped to a chilling negative 35 degrees Fahrenheit. Medical supplies froze solid, rendering them useless, weapons seized and failed to function, and digging foxholes was nearly impossible without the use of machinery. At negative 35 degrees Fahrenheit, the human body sets into hypothermic shock in only 5 to 7 minutes.

Private First Class Raymond Smith was one of the first to make contact with the enemy. Raymond and his peers were vastly outnumbered, and while they fought valiantly, he was sadly reported missing on December 2, 1950, presumed to be dead.

On July 27, 2018, following a summit between then-President Donald Trump and North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un, North Korea returned 55 boxes that contained the remains of American servicemembers killed during the Korean war.

And on March 25, 2021, Raymond's family received closure when his remains were finally identified and accounted for after 71 unbearable years for his family. Raymond's remains